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THE MAGIC LANTERN IN POLITICS

By Leora Wood Wells

With television, the Twentieth Century's most notable descendent of the magic lantern, bombarding us daily with campaign news and spoiling the suspense of every election with its premature projections of winners, we may sometimes wish for the days when politics featured the candidates rather than Chancellor and Cronkite. On the day after the Carter-Kennedy contest at the 1980 Democratic National Convention, the Washington Post headlined a story "The Electronic Eye: Real Carter Adversary." The Carter people, the Post said, "believed correctly that Edward Kennedy was beaten and that the real adversary is television. They want America to come away from this convention with a good opinion of Jimmy Carter and with an image of a strong and united Democratic Party. Left to their own devices, the Carter strategists believe, the networks will not project those images... They will focus on dissent and disarray (driven) by their fierce competition for audience shares, by their need to create drama where none exists."

The molding of public opinion by the visual and auditory media goes back much further than television. In the 1920's and '30's, people clustered around their radios to hear the political news and flocked to the movies to watch newsreels of speechifying politicians. Long before that, the magic lantern played both a symbolic and a real role in politics.

Because it lends itself naturally to the symbolism of "projecting" ideas, the magic lantern has been a favorite device of political cartoonists for several centuries. One of the most famous cartoons of the Revolutionary War era was "The Tea Tax Tempest, or Old Time with his Magick-Lanthern." There are several versions of this cartoon. All of them show Father Time projecting a Revolutionary scene from his magic lantern, which rests upon a globe of the world, as he describes "the Stamp'd Paper" (the tea tax) that ignited "the American Bon Fire." The central image of the projection is an exploding teapot. This cartoon is an adaptation of a painting by John Dixon called "The Oracle" which shows a similar scene but uses a different projected image to make a different point.

Father Time is also the lanternist in "Dissolving Views! Or, the Past and the Future," an 1870 cartoon by Matthew Somerville Morgan, which

compares the political situation in Ireland and France. Morgan appears to have misunderstood the technique of dissolving views. Father Time is shown using two lanterns, but rather than dissolving from one to the other, he is projecting two sets of slides simultaneously, one with each lantern. In one set, a pugnacious Fenian is superimposed over a carefree Irishman. In the other set, Napolean III blots out a figure representing the peaceful Second Empire of France.

Politicians themselves were often shown "projecting" their ideas. The cover cartoon of Puck for Sept. 19, 1888, shows President Grover Cleveland "Throwing Light on the Subject." As he puts his Letter of Acceptance of renomination into his magic lantern, it cast his viewpoints on revenue reform with blinding brilliance upon the dome of the Nation's Capitol. His magic failed, however, at least temporarily. He lost the 1888 election and did not regain the Presidency until four years later.

During an earlier political era, the symbolism of the magic lantern was used both against and for Martin Van Buren, eighth President of the United States (1837-41). An evasive manipulator who played faction against faction to achieve his own ends, Van Buren was dubbed "The Little Magician" by his detractors. His supporters retaliated by publishing a cartoon that showed him as a good little wizard using a magic lantern to project the principles of liberty and equal rights.

Probably it was in its use to project Presidential election returns that the magic lantern came closest to the function filled today by television. At least from the time of the election of Ulysses S. Grant in 1868, one or another of the pictorial news weeklies carried an illustration showing a throng of excited citizens in the street of a large city, eyes turned upward toward an enormous screen on which projected portraits of the candidates alternated with summaries of the election results. In 1888, Harpers Weekly shows a crowd outside the New York Herald building, and a screen with the message, "Harrison Carries the State by 12,000." In 1896, at the close of the heroic struggle between William McKinley and William Jennings Bryan, the Harper's illustration showed a jubilant rooftop crowd waving flags, hats and handkerchiefs as fireworks exploded below and a portrait of the victorious McKinley appeared on the screen. "Such a crowd as tramped and cheered and roared up and down Broadway election night, and surged about every building where a calcium-light was throwing election returns upon a screen, has never before been seen in New York," the paper reported. "The shouts of laughter and merriment rose above the din of horns and rattles... There seemed to be no sympathizers with the defeated candidates."

At the beginning of the 1896 campaign, the Optical Magic Lantern Journal had summed up the situation. "It is quite evident," the Journal proclaimed, "that no election can take place now without the lantern being called into requisition to enlighten the electors by some means or other."

Our own collection of lanterns provided evidence that the lantern was also used for smaller, local groups. Tucked into the box of one of our lanterns, we found two tissue paper strips, crudely lettered in pencil. One reports returns that were being received via some medium or other, probably telephone or telegraph. It reads:

Mc	Mc	Mc	Mc
"N.H. 9000	N.Y. 20,000	Mass 1000	Me 11,000."

The second strip carries a single entry: "McKinley is elected." It doesn't take much imagination to conjure up the image of the group of citizens and campaign workers, all fiercely partisan, who gathered somewhere on that election night to share--with the aid of the magic lantern--their triumph or defeat.

THE MAGIC LANTERN IN CHURCH

By Bombastes Duplex

In a recent publication of this Society, our learned editor has recalled the remarkable success which Dr. Livingstone enjoyed with his lantern in darkest Africa. The well-known author Robert Louis Stevenson employed the lantern with equal effect in Polynesia, where some of his audience observed that the events described in the Bible must indeed have happened, since they had just seen the pictures. Our editor also pointed out that ministers at home had to use the lantern with more discretion than missionaries abroad, and I felt I should pass on to the Society some of the correspondence I have gathered on this subject from various issues of The Optical Magic Lantern Journal of the 1890's.

The Reverend W. H. Young of Athens, Georgia tackled the problem with directness and ingenuity:

> Many good people in pulpit and pew regard the lantern as an intruder into any church. (but) lantern services are never troubled with empty seats or sleepy occupants. Scripture also justifies the lantern sermon. Is it not eminently scriptural to bring scenes and objects into religious addresses? Did not Jesus use actual objects and scenes -- the Roman denarius, the fig tree, the lily of the valley, etc.? In the Old Testament, very many scenes and objects were used by command of God, so that visible illustration of sermons is directly authorised in scripture...the Burning Bush, etc. Is it not quite as scriptural to show the scenes so that every person shall get a clear and perfect idea -- using the divinely best owed genius of the best artists -- even though the lantern has to be employed? But someone may object that there never was any use of screens, or light, or colours in scriptural scenes. Let us see!
>
> Take Genesis ix., 12-17. There is the screen of rain drops upon which the very best lantern illuminate, sunshine, is projecting that most brilliant and effective of coloured pictures.

So in Exodus xiv., 19-24, we have an "effect" slide that no lanternist can yet control. There is the fiery-cloudy pillar, dazzling bright on one side and inky-black on the other, through which was the face of God peering at the Egyptians in terrible anger.

In I. Kings xviii., 43-45, we have dissolving view effects. First, the brazen sea during that prolonged drought; then a little fleck of cloud is seen, which rapidly grows larger followed by that terrible rain storm.

But if some realist asks for an actual screen, let him turn to Daniel v., 5, where a plaster wall is used -- and no better screen has since been invented. Pretty soon there appeared upon this ideal screen the fingers of an immense hand holding a reed-pen and writing those three mysterious words.

The Reverend C. H. Woolston of the East Baptist Church in Philadelphia enjoyed conspicuous success with his Sunday evening services and his lectures, which were given in a hall handsomely fitted with 946 assembly chairs and illuminated by 169 electric lamps. After 13 years of lantern work, Woolston formulated the following Creed:

I Believe:

1. In the sacred use of the Lantern.

2. The Lantern has come to stay.

3. An ounce of picture is worth a ton of talk.

4. Sound often goes in one ear and out the other, but a picture never goes in one eye and out the other.

5. Solomon said: "The hearing ear and seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them." -- Prov. xx., 12. I believe in using them both, and the Lantern is my agent.

6. The Old Testament "Rainbow" was a picture on the sky -- the first Lantern slide.

7. That when Abraham was shown the stars, and told to count them, the Lord was reaching his heart by the eye gate and ear gate combined -- this is all the Lantern will do. It was good enough for Abraham, it is good enough for me.

8. That on the third day the Lord came down in sight of all the people upon Mt. Sinai -- it was a picture of light and fire -- and the Lantern made shining the truth "in sight of all the people."

9. It brings the children to church, and they understand the truth.

10. It helps the believer; catches the eye and heart of the unsaved.

11. It is God's work in God's way. Come and see.

The phenomenon of lantern services was by no means confined to these shores. The Reverend Edgar of the Wesleyan Church in Melbourne, Australia, drew more than 2000 people to his monthly lantern services, and hundreds had to be turned away. In London, the rector of St. Mark's in Kensington "advertised" his services by back-projecting slides of the Life of Christ on a huge screen stretched across the portico of his church. The crowds which gathered in the street were rallied by the singing of a hymn and then invited to come inside for service.

The prize for ingenuity must, however, remain with the United States. In an article in The Optical Magic Lantern Journal, Mr. Hugh Gatesby described lantern services he had attended in the United States in which the photographs of the life models were all taken either by the minister or by his son:

> In England they seem to arrange matters in a quiet unassuming way, but in America there is a certain amount of dash about them...As far as my memory carries me, the parson himself, posed in suitable pose and garbed in suitable garb, represented some good man. His wife, daughters and sons also figured largely in the tableaux vivant-looking sort of groups. Possibly he had conscientious scruples about allowing any of his own family to appear as the devil, for this personification, I was informed, was represented by his manservant or butler, and I must admit that, dressed as he was, he made a very good devil, complete in every respect, including tail and pitchfork. One thing, however, was very noticeable, and that was that in the life model slides, the minister's family represented the good and shining lights mentioned in the Bible, and that all the questionable characters were either photographs of his friends or his servants.

The magic lantern literature is replete with the accounts of dramatic conversions precipated by such moving scenes as a drowning maiden clinging to the Rock of Ages. In the Saturday Evening Post of May 24, 1930, Chet Shafer recalled a showing at his local church:

> Vitalized by buzzing, sputtering carbons, its long-ghostish grey, dust-flecked eye angled out from a Cyclopean eye to a rippled bed sheet stretched on a wire in front of the choir loft. The sheet was furnished by the Ladies Aid Society. And it was a good one too; probably off a spare bed... The views flashed on in profusion. Then, at the very last, came the peerless gem... Before the eyes of everyone was a beautiful though anguished maiden... who clutched despairingly but with evident determination at a rugged cross. Fascinating in its flickering fearfulness, fearful in its powerful significance for those who may have erred or were thinking about it, that picture... gave folks something to think about and carry home after the lighter and more worldly views that had gone before.

Perhaps all is not forgotten even today! I am reliably informed that a dealer in stereopticons on Bromfield Street, once the Mecca of lanternists in Boston, has a large supply of religious slides which are still lent on occasion to church groups.

I would like to end my modest contribution of "voices from the past" by sharing with you some of the testimonials received by the Gospel Lantern Mission of Christ to the Unconverted (in London). These testimonials range from ecstatic witness to the conversionary power of the lantern ("The music and pictures broke down my infidel philosophy; I felt as if I was there walking with Christ") to a grateful recognition of the benefits it could bring to the church and its collection boxes ("Our minister is sharp, he saw the advantage of lantern work"). In these days of divorce and social disrepair, it is especially pleasant to recall the remark of one enthusiastic family: "We have not had time to quarrel since we had the lantern."

Editor's Note: Any of you who have forgotten the true identity of our contributor, Mr. Duplex, may consult your files of past issues of the Bulletin. See Vol. 1, #4.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD?

By Richard Balzer

Each year for the last five years I have given a children's Magic Lantern show. About two years ago a delightful English set of Little Red Riding Hood made its way into my possession. The children loved the slides and tittered appropriately during 'Grandma, what big eyes you have,' etc. I don't know why, but until I was actually showing the slides I didn't notice that the story differed from the story with which I had grown up. Without the aid of a 'proper reading' I had to depend upon my memory. All went well until the end. I was ready, with great drama, to talk about the death of the wolf and recite the appropriate moral lessons when, to my surprise, the last slide showed not the wolf's death but a sedated wolf being delivered to a wild beast show.

Within a month of this show I came upon another set of Little Red Riding Hood: an Ernst Plank circular slide. In this one the wolf got what I had expected--he was killed by the hunter and pushed down a well--but I was still in for a surprise. Grandmother, the poor dear, had not been devoured by the wolf but only scared off. In the last picture she is reunited with Little Red Riding Hood and the woodsman, all three sitting down for a well deserved meal.

How curious, I thought. Now I had two sets of slides that made the German fairy tale which was somewhere deeply etched in my memory less terrifying. Oh how I remember the lessons--the warning not to stop and talk to strangers, the guilt that was connected with the wolf eating a favorite grandmother as a result of loose lips, and the near miss with death.

I wondered particularly about the English slides. Why would Victorian slidemakers, who so often seemed to delight in making terrifying and gruesome slides--noses being pulled and bitten, scarey monsters, drowning cats, orphaned daughters of drunkards, shifting eyes--why would they wish to take a tale so capable of arousing fright and retell it in a more saccharine manner?

I didn't know, nor can I suggest a reason even now. During the last two years I have kept looking for Little Red Riding Hood slides and have accumulated seven different sets. Two American sets, with some minor differences, are similar to my original English set, ending with the wolf being taken to a wild beast show.

I have, alas, an incomplete French set, having only the first two long slides of what appears to have been a four slide set. The second slide shows the wolf attacking grandma. The script, printed on the slide, has grandma being bitten and seemingly devoured but here, my incomplete set ends.

The story on the circular slide I mentioned earlier is duplicated in a small, two slide set for a toy lantern. This same plot line also exists in a beautiful, German set of eight slides. Here, however, the wolf, a colorful, roguish fellow, is closest to my memory. The flattering beast coaxes from Red Riding Hood her travel plans, and is off on his way. Although this brute meets a just end, being thrown down a well, we cannot mourn for grandma because in the last slide she reappears alive and well able to sit down for a meal with the hunter and her granddaughter.

Unfortunately, none of these sets is accompanied by a complete reading. I have found a lantern reading of Red Riding Hood but it doesn't fit any of my sets. It is, however, the closest to my memory and calls back the full horrible weight of the story in the following lines:

> The wolf with his long bounding steps reached the cottage an hour before little Red Riding Hood, and finding the door on the latch (for the old lady scarcely ever locked her door except at night time) went in and quickly killed the poor old woman and ate her up...

...though Red Riding Hood was a very good little girl in most things yet if she had strictly obeyed her mother's injunction not to stop and loiter on the way, or talk to anyone she might meet, the wolf would not have known where her grandmother lived, and very likely her grandmother's life would have been spared. As it was, it was a severe lesson for the poor little girl, who loved her grandmother very dearly and ever after that, so the story goes, she was always most strict and particular in doing as she was told.

Editor's note: Dick asks that any of you who have Red Riding Hood sets or readings please let him know how your stories end. And please--let the Bulletin know, too, so we can continue this interesting saga of differences in a later issue.

To start things off, here's a report on our two slide sets which contain the Red Riding Hood story. One German set (Max Dammhorn) has a different fairy tale on each slide. The four pictures of the RRH slide show:

1. The mother bidding RRH goodbye as the child starts out with her basket of goodies for her grandmother.

2. The wolf bounding out of bed and scaring the wits out of RRH.

3. The wolf unaccountably unconscious in the bed with RRH (even more unaccountably) sitting on his stomach and talking calmly to the hunter, whose gun is propped on a nearby chair.

4. The wolf, still wearing Grandmother's cap, taking what appears to be a voluntary plunge into the well as RRH, Grandmother and hunter look on.

We have 10 slides of a 12 slide fairy tale set of French "Gem" slides with text on the slides. Three of these, with two pictures on each, show the story up to the same place Dick's French set breaks off, where RRH mistakes the wolf for her grandmother and exclaims, "Que vous avez des grands yeux!"

SHARING THE WEALTH--THE STORY OF AN AUCTION

By Larry Rakow

Some come to collecting through avarice, through the hope that one currently unacknowledged doo-dad or another will suddenly be recognized for the treasure it is and greatly appreciate in value. Others come to it through an organized and deeprooted love for and knowledge of a field. Still others are simply at the right place at the right time; opportunity knocks and even the deafest among us must sit up and take notice.

I was certainly among those in the latter category when an astonishing collection of lantern slides, hardware, and related ephemera landed squarely in my lap in mid-March, 1979. My wife, children, and I had quit a brief experiment in rural living some three years before and were happily making our home in a suburban Cleveland community. A country friend called one morning and told me that he had spent the previous day cleaning out the attic of a 92-year-old lady friend and was just about to haul the truckload of "old junk" off to the local dump when he thought to peek inside one of the boxes. "Looks like some kind of photographs," he said. "Thought you might be interested. They're waiting for you in my barn."

My collecting mania was not unknown to him nor to others in that small town. For years I had regaled the members of the local camera club with endless sermons on the importance of our photographic heritage and particularly of the daguerreotypes which I eagerly sought out and collected (and still do). Then and for years afterward, my attitude toward lantern slides was completely in keeping with that among other "serious" image collectors I had encountered: too bulky, too fragile, too recent.

One visit to the barn changed all that. There lay the complete outfit of an itinerate 19th century lantern slide lecturer, the Reverend Earle Wilfley, father of my friend's elderly neighbor. Storage box upon storage box of wood-mounted circular slides--Uncle Tom's Cabin, The Bottle, the Civil War, scientific studies--thousands of loose glass slides, British and American--Lights and Shadows of a Great City, the Johnstown flood, a Trip to India, live model Illustrated Songs--scores of movable slides--slip glass, levers, and rackwork--and lanterns of every size and description, single-lensed and stereopticons. Lacking only the readings and broadsides (Miss Wilfley had thrown them out years ago along with her father's catalogs), the collection was virtually intact. My response was immediate and intense: I had to acquire it and learn more about this fascinating medium.

Over the following months I disposed of a number of major pieces and many minor ones via several routes. The annual trade show of the Photographic Historical Society of the Western Reserve served as a showcase for slides I clearly couldn't use. Trading and sales were brisk. Veteran dealers shied away from my table (though one did purchase my entire offering of rackwork astronomy slides), but the general public was entranced by the delicate hand-painting and beautiful woodwork on the circular pieces and many walked away with the nucleus of a new collection and an awakened appreciation of 19th century imagery. Several months later, I sold fully a third of the entire collection to a close friend and experienced lantern slide enthusiast, retaining the bulk of the estate for further study and cataloging.

All along, my ultimate goal had been to winnow the outfit down to a workable size, to save the very best of this large offering and to use it to recreate an authentic evening of lantern slide entertainment for local historical societies, camera clubs, and social groups. As I continued to study the history of lantern slides and of the period of their greatest popularity, the shape

of the program became more clearly defined and I was able to determine with greater facility those slides I needed to keep and those I wished to be rid of. The only problem became how best to share that material I could not use.

Much of what I had learned about lantern slides had come through my membership in the MLS. Joe Koch had been especially patient with and responsive to what must have seemed like an endless series of questions and letters from this neophyte collector. The Bulletin also served as a welcomed source of information and each issue was eagerly devoured upon receipt. Membership in the British Society further abated my information cravings. At last I was armed with some little knowledge and ready to make real an idea I had been playing with for some time--to issue an auction catalog for those items from my collection I no longer needed.

An auction seemed particularly appropriate for several reasons. First, no one including myself seemed to have a very good idea as to the relative worth of the various items--how much is a slip glass slide worth as compared to a lever-animated slide?--or the specific price for any single piece--how much does a hand-colored 3¼x4" slide by F. Jay Haynes go for? Standards have yet to be set in this area and the confusion felt by collectors was certainly compounded by the practices of local dealers. As Joe put it in one of his letters, "In some antique shops they are asking $4 to $8 per slide and sometimes you can get an apple box full for $40. It appeared reasonable to let the market seek its own level rather than impose arbitrary prices for the lots. Second, an auction open only to members of the Society seemed to be a method of repaying, in some little way, those who had helped and encouraged my studies so much. Last, an auction is undeniably fun and fair. Everyone has an equal opportunity to bid and a real chance to pick up an unexpected bargain. The receipt of a mail catalog always stirs up my collector's blood and I hoped others would share my enthusiasm. Once my course was decided, the only thing left to do, as they say, was to do it.

I based the catalog's format on others I had received and admired; the rules were stolen verbatim from a well-established dealer/auctioneer. The most time-consuming but nonetheless interesting task was writing the descriptions for the ninety-three lots. Remembering the troubles I had had with other catalogs, their dark descriptions and vague references, I swore to make mine as enlightening as possible, accurate and literate. It took a total of twenty-four hours to arrange the lots in a reasonable order, write the descriptions and type the copy for a nine page catalog.

An additional page of illustrations was a must, but a quick survey of local printers revealed that to have selected slides photographed and developed, the pictures arranged and numbered (made "copy ready"), and have two full-page half-tone negatives produced would cost in excess of $100! And that didn't include the price of printing the catalog!! A home remedy was the only solution. I set up slides on a translucent light table and photographed each on black and white film with my 35mm camera and an inexpensive set of close-up lenses. The pictures were printed on a contact sheet (but not enlarged) at a

local lab and carefully cut out, arranged, and glued on an 8½x11" sheet of paper the same evening. Transfer letters and numbers purchased at a stationary store added a professional touch at little expense. Fortunately, an in-house graphics department at my work place does work for employees at cost, reducing the money spent for reproduction to a fraction of what I would have spent on the outside. All in all, the outlay for materials and catalog reproduction came to just under $35. Mailing added an additional $30 to that amount. (Figures are being cited to help others interested in attempting a similar venture, but would have to be adjusted to reflect changes in catalog format and access to means of production.)

I had set up a working calendar with an eye to sending out the catalogs five weeks prior to the auction date. Astonishingly, I found myself right on schedule and hauled close to sixty-five copies (some were sent as a courtesy to the British Society) to the post office one Friday morning, relinquishing to their tender care the evidence of my preceding three weeks hard work.

Waiting was difficult. Days passed without a phone call; the mail box continued to cough up the usual circulars, solicitations and bills. Ten days after the original mailing I received my first response, a generous bid for several of the moveable slides (which proved to be the most popular items in the auction) and pieces of hardware. Auction fever ignited! Every few days a letter or phone call would bring in new figures, some already outbid, some establishing new highs. Phone calls were especially welcome and provided a chance to converse with fellow MLS members, to swap collecting tales, share information, and establish that common ground upon which friendships are built. Several calls concluded with offers to visit each other when "in the neighborhood";these were the best of all and assured the auction's success regardless of its outcome.

The pace accelerated during the final days and by auction night, August 1, 1980 my wife was delicately describing me as a "madman". The rules had stated that phone calls would be accepted from 6 to 11 p.m. that evening or until no calls were received for 15 minutes straight. Six o'clock turned to seven and seven o'clock turned to eight without a single call. I phoned a friend and asked her to dial my number to make sure our phone was working. It was. Eight o'clock turned to nine. Still no calls. I picked up a book and thumbed through the pages. Finally at 9:50 the phone rang and began a series of auction calls that continued until just shy of midnight. Except for a single mail bid I was to receive the following Monday, the auction was over.

It fulfilled my every expectation. Not only was it a financial success, but 75 of 93 fine lots of slides and lanterns had found their way into other collectors' hands; I had the opportunity to make new friends, and helped to establish, to a limited degree, a realistic price guide for future transactions. People paid top dollar, and people walked away with unbelievable bargains. The moveable slides were the most contested and naturally brought the highest

prices--a pierced roller slide for snow effects topped the list at a cool $60. Lots of miscellaneous hand-colored British slides demanded figures that must have their purchasers smiling; a boxed set of 51 went for only $10. Other hotly contested items included illustrated hymn slides with lyrics, a live model illustrated song set, some coming attraction slides, two wood-mounted views of firefighters, and several sets of dissolving slides. Most others brought two or three bids apiece. Many had only one.

Though all restored slides were clearly described as such in the catalog, I had left the actual job of rebinding (with ½" archival quality, acid-free linen tape from Light Impressions Corp., of Rochester, New York) until after the bidding was over. I had figured that unsold lots could be worked on at my leisure; but with nearly everything purchased, the next few weeks saw me working late into each evening, binding and packing lots for shipment. Finally, on September 5, the last boxes were sent off and I turned the final page on my first (and probably only) auction. It had consumed nearly three months of my life, but it was worth it!

Several things strike me in retrospect. First, the vast diversity of collecting interests--some specialize in scientific slides, others in wood-mounted circular pieces. Some like photographic slides and others like illustrated. Some collect hardware, others collect images. Second, the apparent lack of standard pricing in the field--"Isn't that a high bid?" someone asked of a certain item. "Gee, that's still low," the next caller said of the same. Third, what a functional method an auction is of reaching a very specific appreciative audience. I could have offered the same slides at a dozen different photographica shows without eliciting the response I received through the auction. Finally, what a warm and knowledgeable group of people the MLS is comprised of; all offered encouragement and advice. Those who indicated that they too, have excess items they would like to share with others in the Society might want to try a mail auction of their own. It is one way we can all share the wealth of each other's collections and help build a closely knit net of collectors across the country.

Editor's note: We are delighted to offer Larry's interesting description of the happy accident that made him a full fledged magic lantern enthusiast and his decision to conduct an auction open only to members of the Society "as a means of repaying, in some little way, those who had helped and encouraged my studies." For related items, see the report of the recent meeting of the Northwestern members and the "Chairman's Comments" column.

NORTHWESTERN MEMBERS MEET

Nine members of the Northwest regional group of the Magic Lantern Society and several guests met August 16 at Auburn, Washington in the home of Joe and Alice Koch. Guest speaker Howard Droker, a free lance historian who is developing a series of programs for the Seattle library, discussed the creative use of historical slides and films and some of the processes involved in integrating these into informative programs.

Sylvia Coppock, Associate Editor of Antique World and a guest at the meeting, reported in the September issue of her paper that she had learned much about visual media which predated our modern day slide shows, movies and television entertainments. "You'll never find a friendlier group of people," Ms. Coppock wrote. "They are a small, enthusiastic group eager to share their interest in the magic lantern and other 'vintage' optical devices."

Bob Bishop, Chairman of the Northwest group, asked for discussion of appropriate uses of the Society Membership List. Bob takes strong exception to members using the mailing list to contact other members about magic lantern items they have for sale, fearing that this could lead to "commercialization" of the Society. He feels policy guidelines should be developed.

To provide a base for decision by the national membership, John Potter summarized several possibilities that had been discussed by the Northwest group:

1. Let anyone use the list as he sees fit.

2. Let anyone who pays a fee to the ML Society use the list.

3. Either of the above options, with the proviso that any member who does not wish to be on mailing list for anything but official Society business may so indicate, with this information to be included when the membership list is updated.

4. Require anyone who wishes to sell items to put a paid ad in the ML Bulletin.

5. Have the individual or company with items to sell request that the Editor run a brief notice in the ML Bulletin so that interested members can contact the seller for more complete information.

Mr. Potter has pointed out that other options besides those discussed by the Northwest group may occur to members. Comments from members who care to express opinions on this question should be sent either to Joe Koch or the Bulletin.

KOCH'S CORNER: THE CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

. Use of Membership list. One of the principal reasons for organizing the Magic Lantern Society was to put people of like interests in touch with each other and to enable them to trade or sell ML items to each other. From the time the organization was formed, applicants for membership have been asked to indicate whether they prefer that their names not be included on the list distributed to all members.

Paid ads are available in the Buy/Sell/Trade column at the rate of 10¢ per word, with name and address free. My own opinion is that the present system should continue, with a charge for Bulletin ads but no charge to members who distribute information directly to other members at their own expense.

I feel these options should be open to all members. Several of our members are antique dealers, but this fact should not exclude them from any system that applies to the membership as a whole. Also, many collectors become temporary or part-time dealers to dispose of their surplus items and free up cash to support the cost of their continuing purchases. Both the supply of magic lantern items and the demand for them tends to be limited to a small group of people who share certain interests and are therefore apt to be members of the Society. To me, and to most of the members with whom I have discussed this question, it is perfectly reasonable for members to get in touch with each other whenever and however they wish. Please feel free to express your thinking on this question.

Editor's comment: I, too, have discussed this question with several members and have yet to find anyone who objects to the use of the mailing list to contact other members. It is my opinion that most members are interested in anything they receive that relates to magic lanterns, regardless of the source, and that they welcome the opportunity to enhance their collections by buying from or trading with other members. The strength of the favorable response to Larry's auction catalog supports this view. It should also be remembered that responses to the questionnaire sent out when the Society was first formed indicated that most members prefer that it remain informal and unfettered by rules that would regiment its operation.

KOCH'S CORNER CONTINUED

. National Convention Dates Set. Ed Lennert reports that the convention at Eastman House, Rochester, New York, is now definitely set for Friday, August 21 and Saturday, August 22, 1981, with a possible exhibit opening on Thursday night, the 20th, and a trade fair open to the general public as well as Society members on Sunday the 23rd. The plan calls for a combination symposium and exhibit. It is hoped that speakers and lanternists of sufficient quality can be obtained to attract an international audience of collectors, museum curators and photography scholars.

Eastman House will make items from its collection available for display. Members will also be encouraged to bring display items if they are willing to assume full responsibility for protecting their own collections.

A symposium fee, probably $25, will be charged for each member who attends the convention. This will be used to help defray expenses. Members will be responsible for costs and arrangement of their own accommodations but will be helped to locate convenient housing. Side trips to the

Kodak facilities, Niagara Falls and other nearby points of interest may be arranged.

Active working committees will be needed for all phases of preparation for the convention. Ed Lennert is preparing a questionnaire on which members will be asked to indicate whether they plan to attend and on what committees they will serve to help get this project rolling.

Please respond promptly when this questionnaire arrives. Development of an outstanding meeting takes a long time and a lot of work, and we shall need whatever help any and all of you can give.

BOOKS, OLD AND NEW

. The Magic Lantern, How Movies Got to Move by Judith Thurman and Jonathan David, Atheneum, New York, 1978, 101 pages, B/W Illustrations, $8.95 (122 E. 42nd Street, New York, New York 10017).

This slender volume, which appears to be directed toward elementary school age children, conveys some basic factual information about the optical principles involved in creating and projecting moving pictures, and it introduces some of the major figures and events in the history of the magic lantern, photograph and the cinema. Unfortunately, this information is conveyed with a patronizing degree of cuteness. Do children of the late 20th century really need to be told that a movie projector is "a large, noisy machine" with "a pair of wheels that look like metal Mickey Mouse ears, turned sideways?" Or that 1895 was "less than a hundred years ago?"

To reinforce their point about the brevity of cinema history, the authors resort to a sort of "This is Your Life, Baby Lumière" approach. Baby--heroine of the Lumière brothers first movie--is, they remind readers, the same age as the movies. "When she is a year old, Edison opens the first movie theater in America... while she is cutting her first permanent tooth, older children in America are going to Saturday matinees... When 'Baby' Lumière entered her teens, a place called Hollywood began to grow... When Baby Lumière and the movies both celebrate their fifteenth birthday, a new kind of moving picture is waiting in the wings... TELEVISION..." There is a good chance, the authors assure their readers, that Baby is still alive and over eighty and perhaps has great grandchildren who love to hear the story of how she starred in the world's first movie.

Despite their preoccupation with time relationships, the authors have organized their material in a way that may be confusing to young readers. They start with that Mickey Mouse movie projector and jump back and forth among early inventions like the camera obscura and the magic lantern and late 19th and 20th century developments so that it is difficult for the reader to get a sense of the continuity of events.

The illustrations will be familiar to most members of this Society, as they include many of the old standbys. Oddly enough, for a book which emphasizes the motion heritage of the magic lantern, motion slides and dissolving views are ignored both in the illustrations and in the text, and the motion effect of Robertson's phantasmagoria is attributed to the projection of the images on smoke rather than to the fact that his projector was mounted on rollers. Even the semi-motion effect of panoramic slides such as Noah's Ark goes unmentioned. The text gives no clue that various parts of a panorama are viewed sequentially rather than all at the same time.

This is, in short, a frustrating book for any magic lantern buff who would like, say, to offer his children or grandchildren a lucid explanation of what a magic lantern is and how it works. Yet such is the nature of collectors that I am sure many of you will be--as I am--happy to give it shelf space as a reminder of the growing interest in a once-neglected field.

. Collecting Photographia by George Gilbert, Hawthorne Books, 1976, $19.95 (260 Madison Avenue, New York, New York, 10016).

My information on this book is incomplete, as I have seen only excerpts from it sent by Society member Jack Boucher. He reports it to be "excellent". It contains, among other things, several pages of illustrations of lanterns, slides and that marvelous monster machine, the Megalethoscope de Charles Ponti. Having seen numerous junk-type incomplete and inoperable EP lanterns priced in the $85-and-up range on recent trips, I was bemused to note that some of the Ernst Plank lanterns listed in the Sears Roebuck and Company 1908 catalogue sold for 48¢ with six slides, 25 advertising posters and 25 admission tickets. The Gloria lanterns--top of the EP line--sold for $4.98 to $6.85, depending upon size. These prices included a hinged wooden carrying box, twelve colored slides, two motion slides and a chromotrope, 50 posters and 50 tickets. Those were the days, my friends!

. On the opposite end of the scale are several books listed in the summer Medical Sciences catalogue of Zeitlen & Ver Brugge, Los Angeles booksellers. You might want to pick up a rare first edition of Robert Boyle's Some Considerations Touching the Usefullness of Experimental Naturall Philosophy, 1663, for a mere $2,250. Or would you prefer the best edition of Caspar Schott's Physica Curiosa, Sive Mirabilia Naturae et Artis Libris XII, 1697, for $950? On the other hand, it's possible your taste may run to the second edition of Johann Zahn's rare work on vision, optics and lenses entitled Oculus Artificialis Teledioptricus Sive Telescopium, etc. published in 1702 in blind-tooled white pigskin with 250 superb illustrations--one of which, a schematic of ocular structure, strongly resembles a fanciful magic lantern. The price is a nice, round $1,800.

MAGIC LANTERN TOURS

. Orme Tour Postponed. Society member Jack Boucher tells us that expanded job responsibilities have required British magic lanternist Roger Orme to postpone his anticipated American tour, which was scheduled for October-November 1980. Orme and his wife Colleen hope to reschedule their tour for the spring or fall of 1981, so if you are interested in having them visit your area, contact them at the address given in the July Bulletin.

. White's Wonders. Mervyn Heard, who heads White's Wonders, a British company specializing in magic lantern shows, reports that an American tour in the Autumn of 1981 is a possibility. He expects to present a series in universities along the East Coast and in California and would like to hear from any members who would like the Wonders to consider engagements in their areas. Programs include an evening of Victorian melodrama and visual pyrotechnics, an informal illustrated history of the magic lantern, and other special entertainments (even children's parties). Since the company was organized a year ago, it has presented shows in professional theaters, art centers and universities throughout the U.K. and Europe and has been asked to research and present specialized entertainments for Granada Television, the World Council on Alcoholism and the Old Vic Theatre in London, in which magic lantern shows were once performed.

NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE: THE EDITOR'S SCRAPBOOK

. Illustrations. Several of you have inquired why we do not use illustrations in the Bulletin of such a visual medium as the magic lantern. Simple. Money. A single negative would cost around $20, and that's only the beginning of the reproduction costs. As you know, the Society has no income other than members' dues. Even with enormous amounts of time and effort donated by various members, the cost of producing and distributing this Bulletin eats an increasingly large hole in the Society's small bank account. So be patient, people; we are doing what we can.

. Publication Date. We publish four issues of the ML Bulletin per year. We apologize for our habitual lateness in getting the issues out. Usually it is my own extremely heavy work schedule plus the headaches and delays of getting it reproduced that cause the time lapse. This time, as it happens, my material was ready but our contributors had schedule complications. However, I'm sure you'll agree their material was worth waiting for.

It seems we are not alone in this problem. My son tells me his professional journals arrive anywhere from 6 months to 2 years late. And Nancy Bergh reported that her June issue of the British Magic Lantern Journal arrived around the first of October. That made me feel much better.

. List of Slidemakers. You may recall that Nancy Bergh has agreed to compile a comprehensive list of slidemakers if members will comb their files

for information and send it to her. Thus far, she reports, only Bob Bishop has responded. This list is for the benefit of all of us, so please try to send whatever information you have to Nancy.

. Old Acquaintance Department. Well, we almost made it. In the two years of the Society's existence, Chairman Joe Koch and Bulletin Editor Leora Wood Wells have corresponded frequently and talked by telephone on several occasions. But the State of Washington and the Commonwealth of Virginia are a considerable distance apart, so our chances of meeting didn't seem too good--until Joe phoned a few days before my husband and I took off for our cottage on the coast of Maine. Joe and Alice, it developed, were about to leave for the same destination. So I gave them the kind of directions one gives in Maine: "There isn't any address. You just turn in between the fabric shop and the veterinarian's place," and we agreed upon an approximate date. Dates in Maine are always approximate; there's no such thing as a fixed agenda or a planned day.

As luck would have it, my office phoned me to fly home for an emergency one-day meeting--the one day, of course, that Joe and Alice, as instructed, turned in between the fabric shop and the veterinarian's place. Fortunately, they were able to locate Willeroy in the hole in the ground where he was doing some foundation work, and the three of them had a productive hour or so getting acquainted and discussing--what else--the Magic Lantern Society. Joe's trained eye quickly spotted the one lantern from our collection that graces our cottage, and Willeroy showed him our sole ML purchase of the trip--a full color 3¼x4" Columbian Exposition slide which we picked up for 35¢.

. The Passing Show. That slide has a story of its own. On our trips to Maine, we are always torn between our desire to "do the shops" and our desire to get to our cottage as quickly as possible. On the day of our arrival, we had agreed, in the interests of time, to pass up the Freeport Flea Market. But, as we zipped along at 55 m.p.h., my eye caught a glimpse of suspiciously familiar shapes. "You're not going to believe this," I said, "but I just saw a whole table full of magic lanterns and cameras!" Willeroy obligingly screeched to a halt, even tho he was quite certain the fatigue of travel had gone to my head. But sure enough--there was an entire table full of just what I thought I had seen. There was only one catch: the five or six lanterns of several types were useless junk with most of the working parts missing. They were priced from $17 to $60--a bit high to pay for spare parts. The World's Fair slide--at such a reasonable price--was the one treasure in a sizable pile of slides, but it seemed like a good omen to mark the beginning of our vacation.

. School Days. We bought a small history of Vermont the other day to use as a reference on a museum job we are working on. It is a textbook, published in 1903, and surprisingly lively and well written for a period when textbooks often tended toward the pompous and stuffy. What interested me particularly, though, were the penciled marginal notes. All through the early chapters of

the book, someone had written at intervals, "Slide... Slide... Slide." At least some of the children of Vermont in school around the turn of the century, it appears, were lucky enough to have a teacher who used a magic lantern to spice up her history lessons. Whoever she was, we salute her and proclaim her an honorary member of the Magic Lantern Society.

CAN YOU TELL ME? --QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT MAGIC LANTERNS

Q: In our last issue we noted that Larry Rakow wanted to know what can be used to replace the pulley line on a crank operated, gear-type motion slide. One of our members has responded:

A: I think I can help Larry Rakow. The problem to be overcome is, of course, stretching and backlash associated with the use of rubber bands and similar materials that affect smoothness of operation. I find the use of radio dial cable is ideal. This is a nylon-covered fiberglass cord that serves just about the same purpose in a radio in controlling the dial knob. This type of cable is available in most radio-TV stores that sell parts, or it may be obtainable from the manufacturer, G. C. Electronics, Division of Hydro-metals, Rockford, Illinois, 61101. A 25' coil of #74-25 medium dial cable is under $2.00. It may be available in other thicknesses.

Jack E. Boucher

Q: I am trying to discover the manufacturer of a toy lantern I have. It is a box style tin lantern with curved chimney, tin lens unit and kerosene lamp. The manufacturer's circular metal plate on the side door carries the word "Exhibition" and the initials S. W. C." Do these identifications ring a bell with anyone?

Nancy A. Bergh

A: Can anyone supply this information for Nancy?

BUY/SELL/TRADE

Q. I have 30 rectangular magic lantern slides for sale. There are four pictures on each slide. Some are marked J.F. and others T.A. Except for a few scratches on one slide, they seem intact. How should they be stored until I find a buyer? How do I determine what they are worth?

Josephine Wells Brown
Box 145, Cambridge, N.Y. 12816

A. The J.F. slides were probably made by Johann Falk of Nuremberg, Germany. I do not recognize the TA identification. If the slides do not have double glass, and if you do not have slotted wooden boxes which keep the slides separate from each other, be sure the painted side of each rests against the clear glass side of the next. Never face the painted sides toward each other. They are apt to stick to each other if they get damp in humid weather or excessively hot. Protect them against exposure to sunlight. See Vol. I, #2, of this

Bulletin (July 1979) for more detailed suggestions. The value of slides varies widely and essentially is whatever the market will bear in your area. It is, of course, also affected by the condition, quality and content of the slides. Checking a few antique shops and shows will give you your best guidance.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE:

New Members:

Louis Moran
P. O. Box 1663
Bellevue, WA. 98009

George Reed
5239 Howland St.
Philadelphia, PA 19124

Address change:

Mr. & Mrs. L.M.H. (Mike) Smith have moved. Their new address is available on request from Joe Koch.